

News Release

Tashi Gurung, senior at UM Crookston from Nepal, Recognized with Prestigious U of M SEED Award

*By Itolfele on Monday, November 11, 2013*An environmental sciences major at the University of Minnesota Crookston is the most recent recipient of the prestigious Scholarly Excellence in Equity and Diversity (SEED) award. Senior Tashi Gurung (at right), who came to the UM Crookston from Nepal, will be recognized on Wednesday, November 13, 2013, at the McNamara Alumni Center at the University's sixth annual Equity and Diversity Breakfast. During the breakfast, the University community and external stakeholders--alumni, donors, community organizations, and corporate entities--come together to recognize the students, faculty, and staff doing the work, and to reaffirm the University's commitment to equity and diversity.

Gurung, who has a 3.8 grade point average, is from Lo-manthang, a remote village in the Himalayas of Nepal at 14,000 feet. Villagers still live a nomadic life: cooking over dung fires, riding horseback for days to reach the nearest town, and living without luxuries like electricity, healthcare, and transportation. He learned early that the "pen is more powerful than the gun."

Starting small with UMC Multicultural Club events, such as "One Day without Shoes" that helps poor children in Africa, Gurung has grown to work on projects with local, regional, and international connections. He has been a part of a campus project turned nonprofit organization called "Clean Water for Everyone."

"Last summer, I completed a clean water project in my village in Nepal. This social justice project impacted more than 2,000 lives by providing clean drinking water for the community." When the villagers expressed their gratitude and appreciation, Gurung realized that what was a project for him was a blessing to them and the experience has become a powerful moment in his life.



"Engaging as a student at the University of Minnesota Crookston showed me the power and potential of education. Volunteering at community events, contributing to diversity training, fund-raising, organizing multicultural programs, and putting all of my education to work in real communities expanded my confidence beyond the classroom," Gurung explains. "Because of these golden opportunities I am better informed, skilled, and more knowledgeable. Inspired by the satisfaction earned from small projects, my commitment is strong, and I yearn to expand this impact beyond individuals and communities to change this world into a better, cleaner, and more resilient planet through sustainable practices."

Background

The Office for Equity and Diversity's SEED awards program honors and acknowledges diverse students who are doing outstanding work at the University of Minnesota, both in and out of the classroom. Undergraduate SEED Award recipients are diverse students who demonstrate impressive achievement and leadership in the area(s) of academic performance and/or community outreach/activism.

In addition, SEED Award recipients must demonstrate a deep understanding of and commitment to issues of equity, diversity, and social justice through their academic work and/or service to the community. Six to ten undergraduates are honored with the SEED Award each year. For more information, visit www.academic.umn.edu/equity/awards/seed_awards.html.

Past recipients of the SEED award from the U of M Crookston include Lhakpa Gurung in 2010, Yangchen Gurung in 2011, and Wemimo Samson Abbey and Dae Yeul "Danny" Lee in 2012.

Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 28 bachelor's degree programs, 20 minors, and 39 concentrations on campus--as well as 11 degrees online--in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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